

ACTION: POL

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

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INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KABUL 000432

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: POLITICAL LEADERS ON STATE OF EMERGENCY OPTION

REF: KABUL 371

Classified By: A/DCM Robert Clarke, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Afghan political leaders and opposition groups held a series of meetings this week ahead of Karzai's expected 2/28 announcement of his intentions regarding the election date and issue of presidential continuity. After consultations with the Palace, international community, and each other, most Afghans anticipate Karzai will ask the Independent Election Commission to propose an earlier election date in order to comply with the Constitution. Knowing the commission will respond that an earlier election date is logistically impossible, Karzai is expected to declare a state of emergency, using a process outlined in the Constitution to permit him to continue serving as president and postpone elections to August or September.

¶2. (C) United Front member Sediq Chakari attended Palace and opposition group meetings over the last week to discuss this potential solution. He described to PolOff the views of other leaders.

- In favor of the state of emergency and a Karzai-led caretaker government: all Cabinet ministers, Attorney General Aloko, Chief Justice Azimi, 2nd Vice President Khalili, Marshall Fahim, MP Abdul Rassoul Sayyaf, and Hazara leader Mohaqeq.

- Undecided: United Front leader Rabbani, Pir Gailani, and Upper House Speaker Mojaddedi.

- Opposed: Lower House Speaker Qanooni and First Vice President Massoud, both continuing to maintain that Karzai needed to step down after 5/22 if he intended to run for president.

¶3. (C) Chakari said Qanooni has promised to allow Parliament to vote on a state of emergency, if asked, even though he opposed the option personally. Massoud told other leaders he had to remain opposed to any deal that kept Karzai in office to save face after his heated argument with the president at a recent Cabinet meeting (reftel). Chakari thought that Rabbani, Gailani, and maybe Qanooni would eventually come on board, but predicted Massoud would, at best, only moderate his public denouncements of a post-5/22 "illegitimate government." Mojaddedi was upset that he was rapidly losing momentum to head an interim government, but knew he could not push that option without significant support from others.

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